

I claim:

1. A method for increasing the safety of operation of an electrical component, in particular of electrical components in a vehicle, comprising the steps of:
  - actuating a load via a microcontroller,
  - detecting actively a change in the switching state of a relevant load, and
  - performing diagnostics irrespective of the instant of actuation of the load by the microcontroller and/or by a superordinate control unit.
2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a diagnostic feedback is applied to a wake-up interrupt input of the microcontroller.
3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a diagnostic feedback is applied to an input for a non-maskable interrupt as diagnostic readback port.
4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein switch-in or disconnection of a load is performed by a vehicle electrical system control unit, wherein a central locking motor preferably being actuated as the load.
5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein diagnostic means are used to determine whether a fault state can be eliminated by the microcontroller, wherein remedial action being initiated by a superordinate control unit if the microcontroller fails.

6. A device for increasing the safety of operation of an electrical component in a circuit, particularly of electrical components in a vehicle, wherein a load is connected to a microcontroller for actuation, comprising means of actively detecting a change in switching state of the load which are designed to act, independently of the instant of active triggering of a microcontroller, upon the microcontroller and/or a superordinate control unit.
7. The device according to Claim 6, wherein the device further comprises:
  - means for actuating a load via a microcontroller, and
  - means for performing diagnostics irrespective of the instant of actuation of the load by the microcontroller and/or by a superordinate control unit.
8. The device according to Claim 6, comprising a vehicle electrical system control unit for switching in or disconnecting the load as specified by the microcontroller.
9. The device according to Claim 6, wherein the additional hardware compared to known system is essentially combined in the microcontroller.
10. The device according to Claim 6, wherein diagnostic means are provided for identifying a fault state which cannot be eliminated by the microcontroller, and wherein said diagnostic can also take remedial action.

11. A device for increasing the safety of operation of an electrical component, in particular of electrical components in a vehicle, comprising:

- means for actuating a load via a microcontroller,
- means for detecting actively a change in the switching state of a relevant load, and
- means for performing diagnostics irrespective of the instant of actuation of the load by the microcontroller and/or by a superordinate control unit.

12. The device according to Claim 11, wherein a diagnostic feedback is applied to a wake-up interrupt input of the microcontroller.

13. The device according to Claim 11, wherein a diagnostic feedback is applied to an input for a non-maskable interrupt as diagnostic readback port.

14. The device according to Claim 11, comprising a vehicle electrical system control unit for switch-in or disconnection of a load, and a central locking motor preferably being actuated as the load.

15. The device according to Claim 11, comprising a superordinate control unit coupled with said means for performing diagnostic to determine whether a fault state can be eliminated by the microcontroller, wherein remedial action being initiated by the superordinate control unit if the microcontroller fails.